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SOC101

Section: 22

Quiz- 1

1.What are the basic assumptions of the social functionalist perspective regarding the nature and operation of society? (5)

2.Describe the social conflict and symbolic interaction theories in sociology and show how they differ from one another. (5)

Answer to the Question no.1

The basic assumptions of the social functionalist perspective about the nature and operation of the society are:

The society with its complex system and parts works in unity to help maintain stability and social order.

The parts mentioned here are actually the social structures created in the society. By the structures, it means the relative patterns of behavior among the people of the society. The parts include religion, division of labor, family.

And the structures are there to fulfill certain functions required by the society. Like family teaches socialization to children.

Then, the social functions are of two types. 1. Manifest Functions and 2. Latent Functions

The functions which are intended, that is we want the results are manifest functions. Whereas, we do not want the result directly of certain activities are latent functions. Like when school helps the children know more about the world it is manifest functions or as told functions whereas the children knowing how to socialize because of school is latent.

The social functionalist also acknowledges the social dysfunction that may occur within the society. By dysfunction they mean any change in the regular pattern of operations within the society. Like how technology can help the economy but also can destabilize by reducing the need of labor.

Above all, it sees the society as fundamentally functional and stable.

Answer to the Question no. 2

The social conflict theory sees society as having different groups which are constantly competing with each other to have more of the scarce resources like power, money, land, food, or even status. According to this perspective, change is the driving force of the society and change happens due to these conflicts.

Symbolic Interactionism sees society defined by the everyday interactions between each of the habitat of the society. All of its focus is on how one people interact with another, and how they create a shared reality between just them through interactions. It doesn’t take into account the raw interactions, instead it tries to interpret and study what those specific raw gestures or interactions are meaning to one another. The theory acknowledges the fact that each individual might have different meaning to a single symbol. In this theory, there is no single Truth, each has his own.

Both the social conflict and symbol interaction theories differ a lot as they view society in complete different ways. The social conflict is macro focused, that means it only studies the big situations, groups people and identifies the patterns of groups. Symbol Interactionism, on the other hand is micro-focused and sees the society in the eye of each individual. The social conflict theory even presses the same truth among everyone, whereas the symbol interaction theory says truth may differ between people. The later theory knows the reality between even two people can be different whereas the social conflict says one single truth, that conflict brings change and change is good. A single theory for all!